



Ancient Egypt:

'The Second Intermediate Period':

**The War between the Theban Egyptians and
the 'Hyksos' (the Amu or 'Proto-Israelites'):**

Primary Sources:

The Rhind Mathematical Papyrus,

Copied behind the Great Walls of the City of Avaris,

and The Tempest Stela

of the Victorious Pharaoh Ahmose I, 'the Liberator',

as painstakingly translated by

the eminent Egyptologist

Donald B. Redford (1934–2024)

This e-book is part of *a series of publications* dealing with the numerous primary and secondary sources speaking of or referring to “the War between the Theban Egyptians and the ‘Hyksos’” (as I have chosen to style it), or between the native Egyptians and (a section of) the “Proto-Israelites” – a series of long and terrible armed conflicts which took place in the 1500s B.C., and which culminated in the Departure or “Exodus” (possibly in the wake of a ceasefire, or some other type of agreement) of the “Hyksos” from the eastern Nile Delta (the “Goshen” of the *Book of Exodus*), and in the concomitant Liberation of All Egypt from the yoke of ‘Hyksos’ domination and overlordship. Pharaoh Ahmose the First was the Egyptian leader who completed the victory over the Amu, chasing them all the way into “Palestine” or “Canaan” (Retenu/Retjenu/Phoenicia), which was where their ancestors had come from, and which was also part of the ‘Hyksos’ sphere of influence, becoming the first emperor of the glorious 18th dynasty (which was really the continuation in a new form of the 17th royal dynasty of Thebes, which had been characterized by the involuntary vassalage or subjugation of a number of its rulers to the “Hyksos” or Amu monarchs of the Delta) and ushering in a great Egyptian National Revival.

For other papers belonging to the above mentioned series, please see the e-book section on my profile at <https://vid.academia.edu/EdmundSchilvold>, as well as the Bibliography at the end of this document.

Front page illustration: An imaginative digital rendering of the Egyptian deity Seth, “Lord of Avaris”, whom the ‘Hyksos’ monarch Apopi/Apophis addressed as “father” (Redford, 1997, p. 7).

Regarding the three terms employed in this document – “Hyksos”, “Asiatics” and “Amu” – the latter of the three is the word that is nowadays usually translated into English as “Asiatics” (because these “Asiatics” had come into Egypt from the Levant, and the area now styled the Levant, or Palestine, was viewed by the ancients as being part of “Asia”), but which Sir Alan Gardiner, the great Egyptologist, and the capable translator of the *First Kamose Stela* into English (1916), chose to leave untranslated – *perhaps* because leaving it intact reveals the rather likely connection

between this ancient Egyptian term for the ethnic category which produced the “Hyksos Pharaohs” and the “Hebrew” term “Am”, which, in the Tanakh (roughly equivalent to the “Old Testament”), is often – albeit not *always* – used to designate the “Israelites”.

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The footnotes accompanying the translation have been put within ((double parentheses)), for the sake of legibility, while the numbers referring to the lines on the stela have been retained in (single parentheses).

Significant additions to the text of the original translation have been put within {curly brackets}, and have sometimes also been marked with the initials of the undersigned, i.e. with “E.S.”, for the sake of clarity.

Again, the reader should note that this document is part of a new series of concise e-books of mine dealing with the ancient Egyptian stela and papyri and monuments pertaining to or having some bearing on the so-called *Enigma of the Hyksos*, which, in my humble view, is not much of an enigma anymore. It is, after all, some *160 years* since Willem Pleyte (1836–1903), a pioneering Dutch Egyptologist, published his ground-breaking work on the Hyksos and the Cult of Seth, *La religion des pré-Israélites* [the Religion of the Proto-Israelites]: *recherches sur le dieu Seth* [Research on the Deity of Seth] – a work which was in fact held in high esteem by a number of prominent scholars in the late 1800s, but which was never, interestingly, fully translated into English – and more than *half a century* since the Austrian Archaeological Institute began its systematic excavations of the site of the ancient city of Avaris.

As far as I am able to ascertain, we presently know more than enough to be able to conclude that ancient historians like Titus Flavius Josephus, Manetho, Apion and

Ptolomy of Mendes were right when they identified the “Israelites”, or some of their ancestors, with the Hyksos expelled from the Egyptian Delta during the reign of pharaoh Ahmose I. To quote from my e-book dealing with the Second Kamose Stela (pp. 22–23):

The testimony of Ptolemy of Mendes, an Egyptian priest, regarding the “Exodus” (found in Tatian’s polemical *Address to the Greeks*), considered trustworthy by Sir Alan H. Gardiner

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—THE EGYPTIANS PLACE MOSES IN THE REIGN OF INACHUS.

“Of the Egyptians also there are accurate chronicles. Ptolemy, not the king, but a priest of Mendes, is the interpreter of their affairs. This writer, narrating the acts of the kings, says that the departure of the Jews from Egypt to the places whither they went occurred in the time of king Amosis {i.e. Pharaoh Ahmose}, under the leadership of Moses.

He thus speaks: ‘Amosis lived in the time of king Inachus.’

After him, Apion the grammarian, a man most highly esteemed, in the fourth book of his *Ægyptiaca* {or *Aegyptica*} (there are five books of his), besides many other things, says that Amosis destroyed Avaris in the time of the Argive Inachus {one of the kings of the Hellenic city-state of Argos}, as the Mendesian Ptolemy wrote in his annals.

{‘Apion the grammarian’ is the Apion whom Titus Flavius Josephus thought it needful to counter when he wrote his *Against Apion* (*Contra Apionem*) polemical treatise, parts of which I examine in my *Introduction to Fragments of the Real History of Israel* essay (Schilvold, 2024).

Let us, by the way, remind ourselves of what Sir Alan H. Gardiner said of this Ptolomy [see my e-book dealing with the First Kamose Stela]:

“The Greek writers show themselves particularly well informed about Avaris and its history, Ptolemy of Mendes relating its capture by Amosis I (see E. MEYER , *Aeg. Chronologie*, p. 74, n. 1), and Manetho (in JOSEPHUS, *Contra Apionem*, I, 237) being aware that it was Typhonian, i.e. that Seth was worshipped there. [The ancient Hellenes equated Seth with Typhon. – E.S.]” (Gardiner, 1916, p. 99)}

**But the time from Inachus to the taking of Troy occupies twenty generations.
(...)”**

Introduction to the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus and its notes

Contrary to what one might think, the so-called Rhind Mathematical Papyrus is not named after a place in Egypt, nor after an Egyptian person, but after Alexander Henry Rhind, the Scottish antiquarian who, in 1858, “purchased two parts of the papyrus” while in Luxor, and who was told that it had been “found in ‘one of the small buildings near the Ramesseum’”. This document, which is one of the few ancient treatises on mathematics which has not been lost, is of significant interest to the inquiry into the War between the Theban Egyptians and the Hyksos, and the nature of the 15th dynasty – the dynasty based in Avaris – due to certain notes added to the papyrus while the above mentioned war was still going on.

Interestingly, the mathematical expositions of this document were copied by a scribe named Ahmose (apparently a fairly common name in Egypt at the time) from an older document created during the reign of the twelfth-dynasty pharaoh Amenemhat III – the same ruler whom it is now believed that one of the so-called “Hyksos” or Tanis Sphinxes depicts. Since the Rhind Papyrus is dated to the 33rd year of the reign of the “Hyksos” or Amu ruler Apepi/Apopi/Apophis, and it would seem, therefore, that the copying from the older original took place *in the City of Avaris* – the Theban Egyptians did not even recognize Apophis and the other Hyksos monarchs of the 15th dynasty as legitimate rulers – the following question naturally arises: Was one of the

reasons for this copying a bond, or some other connection still unknown to us, between Amenemhat III and Apophis?

The first addition of the original mathematical treatise from the 12th dynasty, which is not really a note, but a short introduction to the mathematical content and its origin, is written by Ahmose, the scribe, and gives year 33 of Apophis as the time of copying. The second note (also referred to as “Number 87”), which is found on the verso or backside, mentions what would seem to be the conquest of the City of Heliopolis and the eastern border region fortress of Sile/Tjaru by Ahmose, King of Thebes – soon to become Ahmose I, liberator of Egypt and founder of the 18th dynasty. This note also mentions a year eleven, which is probably the 11th year of the reign of the “Hyksos” monarch Khamudi or Chamudi, son of Apophis. (Source: Wikipedia)

Upon closer examination, the internal evidence of the messages recorded on this papyrus makes it a virtual *certainty* that it was created in Avaris, by individuals who were sympathetic to, or compelled or obliged to act respectfully and submissively towards, the Hyksos overlordship over and domination of both Upper and Lower Egypt. The most revealing string of words of all is found in the rather strange and disjointed series of brief remarks referred to as “Number 86”, and reads as follows:

“his brother, the steward Kamose”

The “steward” was precisely how the “Hyksos” rulers of the Delta viewed Kamose, King of Thebes, since he was their vassal or subordinate, but to Kamose and his family, this designation would have seemed belittling and degrading. We know this because of what Kamose says of himself and of how he viewed the situation Egypt was in on the two stelae he commanded to be made. On the first, he styles himself “Kamose, granted life, beloved of Amen-re, lord of Thrones of-the-Two-Lands”, and claims that “no man rests, being wasted (?) through servitude (?) of the Setyu” [an alternative Egyptian designation for the Amu], and proclaims that “My desire is to deliver Egypt” (Gardiner, 1916, pp. 107–108). The second features even stronger language; there Kamose says that “{You sent me} a miserable {or disrespectful, or abusive} answer out of your town {, Apophis}.” He then goes on to say that “Your speech is mean when you make me {Kamose} a (mere) ‘prince,’ whereas you are a

‘ruler,’ as if to beg for yourself the execution-block to which you will fall.”
(Pritchard, 1969, pp. 554–555)

The brother of Kamose was Ahmose, of course. That second name is not mentioned anywhere in the remarks comprising “Number 86”, however.

There is also the strange avoidance of the name of Ahmose in “Number 87” – where “one” and “this southern ruler” almost certainly refer to the King of Thebes – it is as if the mere mentioning of the name of the brother of the late Kamose was feared, and seen as somehow increasing the likelihood of his success.

Thirdly, there is the respectful attitude towards Apopi mentioned earlier. Consider how Kamose describes that same ruler in the message found on his second stela: “O wretch” and “miserable Asiatic {Amu}”.

Ahmose, the copyist, carries an Egyptian name, not a Semitic one, interestingly enough. Perhaps he was one of the traitors who, according to the Second Kamose Stela, gave themselves over to serving the Asiatics {the Amu}, after they had abandoned Egypt”, or perhaps he was simply a powerless servant or employee of the “Hyksos”, or a captive of theirs.

The notes made in Avaris on the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus,
referring to Ahmose and his encirclement of that “Capital of the
Hyksos”

The scribal intro on the title page (quote):

“Accurate reckoning. The entrance into the knowledge of all existing things and all obscure secrets.

This book was copied in the year 33, in the fourth month of the inundation season, under the majesty of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, ‘A-user-Re’ {or Aa-User-Ra; the Throne Name of the Hyksos pharaoh Apepi/Apophis – a ruler not recognized by Thebes}, endowed with life, in likeness to writings of old made in the time of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Ne-ma’et-Re’ {or Ni-Maat-Ra; the Throne Name of Amenemhat III}.

It is the scribe Ahmose who copies this writing.”

(Chace, 1927, p. 49)

Commencement of notes referring to Ahmose, King of Thebes (Donald B. Redford’s translation):

Rhind Mathematical Papyrus; Day-book Entry. (Helck 1975a: 78 [no. 113]; Goedicke 1986a: 37–47; full bibliography in Spalinger 1990: 295ff.).

{This seems to be the note found on the verso of the papyrus}

I (1) “Regnal year 11, 2nd month of shomu <day ... > ((169)) (sic) one entered Heliopolis.

II (1) First month of akhet, day 23 ((170)): this (2) southern ruler {presumably Ahmose, then King of Thebes} broke into ((171)) Sile. (3) Day 2 [5]: it was heard that Sile (4) had been entered.

{Sile, also known as Tjaru, was a strategically important border region fortress, controlling the route between the eastern part of the Nile Delta and the southern part of Retjenu/Retenu/“Canaan”/“Palestine”. By taking and garrisoning Tjaru, Ahmose I would have been able to prevent the Amu or “Canaanites” resident in Retjenu from coming to the aid of their “Hyksos” brethren in and around the City of Avaris.}

III (1) Regnal year 11, first month of akhet, birth of Seth: ((172)) (2) sound of thunder

was emitted by the Majesty of this god; (3) birth of Isis: ((173)) the heaven rained.”

(Redford, 1997, p. 16)

Notes for the above translation

169. In the mid 16th century B.C. the date would have fallen in early July.

170. Late October.

171. Literally, “gored (his way).”

172. Third epagomenal day.

173. Fourth epagomenal day.

(Redford, 1997, p. 31)

Alternative, older translation of the same notes (Arnold Buffum Chace)

“**Year 11**, second month of the harvest season. **Heliopolis** {native Egyptian name: Onu (the Biblical “On”)} was entered.

The first month of the inundation season, 23rd day, the commander (?) of the army (?) attacked (?) **Zaru** {or Tjaru}.

25th day, it was heard that Zaru was entered.

Year 11, first month of the inundation season, third day. **Birth of Set** {or Seth}; the majesty of this god caused his voice to be heard. Birth of Isis, the heavens rained.”

(Chace, 1927, p. 119)

Context for these notes (Arnold Buffum Chace)

There are three references in the Rhind papyrus to the Egyptian calendar. We find in the beginning the date when it was written, in Problem 66 the fact that 365 days make a year, and in Number 87 three dates and two of the days that were called epagomenal days.

The Egyptians counted their years from the beginning of the king's reign, starting anew with each new king, and, with the many breaks in their history and the uncertainty regarding many of their kings, it is difficult now to determine the dates of events, or the lengths of intervals between them.³ In the Egyptian calendar year there was a certain shifting of the seasons and of the dates of events depending on them, that sometimes furnishes a clue for these determinations.

The Egyptian year consisted of 12 months of 30 days each and 5 days at the end that were regarded as not belonging to any month. The five days were called epagomenal days and were supposed to be the birth days of five of the gods.¹ There were three seasons of four months each.

Names were given to the months, but each month was also known simply as the first, second, third, or fourth of the season to which it belonged. The most striking event of the Egyptian year is the rising of the Nile, which begins in July, and the seasons were named with reference to this event and its consequences. Thus the first season was called the season of the inundation (akhet, mentioned at the beginning of the papyrus and in Number 87), the second season was the season of the "going forth" (prot) when the vegetation burst forth in the fields as the waters of the river were subsiding, and the third season was the season of summer (shomu, mentioned also in Number 87), when the earth became dry and parched before the coming of the next inundation.

These names show that at first the calendar year was made to begin about the time that the Nile began to rise. But the rising of the Nile depends on the solar year, which is about a quarter of a day longer than this Egyptian calendar year, and so the Nile began to rise a day later after four years and a month later after 120 years, and after a time the entire season of the inundation came before the river began to rise, and was

the driest season of the three. They soon found that their year was a “wandering year,” but continued to use it.

The beginning of the rise of the Nile, or any other event that depends on the seasons, is not as regular, nor as easy to determine exactly as some things that may be observed of the stars. The Egyptians early discovered that in the daily apparent revolution of the sun and stars around the earth the stars were continually gaining on the sun. If they watched a star, setting perhaps not long after sunset, they would notice that it set earlier each night than the night before, until at last it would disappear almost before there was darkness enough to make it visible. Then, after a certain number of days, they would see it in the east rising before the sun and appearing in the morning sky as a harbinger of the coming day.

They noticed this, in particular, of Sirius, the brightest of all the fixed stars. The day when Sirius first appeared as a morning star had a religious significance. We can imagine the priests in the early morning, gazing out over the desert, waiting for the rising of the sun, and then one morning to the south of the place where the sun would appear some one would be the first to catch a glimpse of the rising star just as its light was being put out by the advancing sunlight.

(Chace, 1927, pp. 43–44)

The message of the ‘Tempest Stela’ of Ahmose I (also called the ‘Storm Stela’)

With a new interpretation of the latter part of the Tempest Stela (corroborated by Queen Hatshepsut and Manetho)

Commencement of translation:

72. The “Storm” stela (Vandersleyen 1967: 123–59; Helck 1975a: 104ff. [no. 124]; Foster-Ritner 1996). ((174))

(1) “[Live Horus: with great forms; the Two] Ladies: fair of birth; Horus-of-Gold: who binds the Two Lands, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nebpehtet-re, son of Re, Ahmose [.....], living forever!

Now H.M. {His Majesty} came [... after (?)] (2) Re had [appoint]ed (?) him to be king himself; and indeed H.M. dwelled in the town of ‘Him-who-provisions-the-Two-Lands’ ((175)) [... (3) in the foreland] ((176)) south of Dendera, while A[mun lord of the thrones of the Two Lands] was in Southern Heliopolis.

His Majesty (4) it was that fared south to present [the offering (?) in the] chapel; then after the hecatomb [.....] (5) and attention was directed [.....] this [district (?)], while indeed [...] directed [... (6) ... and his limbs clove unto this temple, and his body was filled with joy [... (7) ..

..... Now indeed] this [god] expressed great desire ((177)) [.....] His Majesty [but (?)] the gods were vexed, (8) they were angry [.....] of (?) the gods.

The sky came on with a [rain]-storm, and [darkness] was in the western heavens; (9) it rained without [letup ... the cr]y of the people, powerful [.....] [the thunder] upon the mountains, louder than the noise of (10) the ‘Cavern’ which is in Abydos. ((178))

Then every house and hut [where] they had repaired [collapsed and the detritus was] (11) in the flood of water, like reed canoes, at the very gate by the palace; and for a period of [...] days (12) no lamp was ever lit in the Two Lands.

Said H.M.: ‘This is much more serious than god’s punishment, greater [than] the gods’ [judge]ment!’ Down went H.M. (13) into his barque, his councillors in his train, with [his] army on west and east concealing themselves, for they were wearing no clothing (14) due to the god’s punishment.

An arrival did H.M. make at the residence of Wese, and gold again gilded ((179)) this divine image, that he might receive what he desired. (15) Then H.M. refurbished the Two Lands in (their) condition of flood-devastation, he did not stint (?) in supplying

them with silver, (16) gold, copper, unguent and clothing for every deficiency, as desired.

{Pharaoh Ahmose deals with the terrible legacy of the Hyksos occupation of Egypt}

(17) Residence did H.M. take up within the Great House, l.p.h. {Life – Prosperity – Health!}

Then they reminded H.M. of the destruction of the townships, the collapse of buildings, the demolition of the temples and the devastation ((180)) of the pyramid-tombs –

(18) ‘What had never been done (before) is what has (now) been done!’ –

{C.f. Queen Hatshepsut’s inscription}

Thereupon H.M. commanded to restore the temples which had fallen into ruin throughout this entire land, to set up (19) the gods’ monuments, and to erect their walls; to put the sacred implementa (back) into the ‘Select Chamber,’ ((181)) **to conceal the place of the mysteries, to re-introduce the (20) images into their shrines, ((182)) which had been scattered about on the ground.**

{The massive and widespread destruction described above is clearly not the result of a tempest, or of some other type of bad weather, or of an unusually high inundation – the important temples were, after all, all built of stone, and would have been able to withstand any storm – but of *the actions of the Hyksos*, combined with the poverty their occupation threw even the Theban Egyptians into.

This is also made manifest by the great similarity between the above statements and those made by Queen Hatshepsut – who explicitly relates the sad state of affairs to the time when the Amu where in the Delta – as well the resemblance between both of them and those attributed to Manetho, i.e. to Manetho’s description of what happened when the Hyksos invaded the country, quoted by Titus Flavius Josephus in his *Contra Apionem*.

“The temple of the mistress of Qusae {probably Hathor}, which had <completely> (16) fallen into dissolution – the earth having swallowed its noble sanctuary, children dancing on its roof<s> (...) I hallowed it, built anew, fashioning its Leading Serpent of gold < ... > (19) in order to defend its town in the processional bark.

(...)

For I have raised up what was dismembered, beginning (37) from the time when the Asiatics {the Amu} were in the midst of the Delta, (in) Avaris, with vagrants {or nomads} in their midst, (38) toppling what had been made {the same destruction Manetho would later speak of}. They ruled without the Sun {for the Hyksos were worshippers of Seth, or the equivalent of Seth, and Avaris was a center of the cult of that deity} (...)”

(Queen Hatshepsut, Speos Artemidos Inscription)

It seems that some may actually have completely misunderstood what is said towards the end of the Tempest Stela, and that they therefore genuinely believed that a situation in which temples throughout the land had fallen into ruin and holy images of gods had been thrown onto the ground had been caused by a great tempest.}

The braziers were to be arranged, the offering stands set up and their loaf-offerings (21) established; the rations of the office-holders ((183)) were to be doubled, and **the land restored to what it was in the beginning.**

And they acted in accordance with everything H.M. commanded.”

(Redford, 1997, p. 16)

Notes for the above translation

174. Line numbering follows the verso.

175. Part of the titulary of Kamose (H. Goedicke, oral communication).

176. Read [nt] nt.

177. Possibly, in view of what follows, a desire that the divine image be plated (?) with gold was expressed. Or is Amun's general warmth for the king contrasted with the (unexplained) anger of the other gods?

178. I.e., the wailing for Osiris in the pantomime of his passion, enacted yearly at Abydos.

179. Literally "returned in gilding."

180. W', possibly the same word as in Kamose II, 23 (q.v.), wherein it could mean "destructive force": cf. Kitchen 1979 II, 52: 6–10, 69: 14 (Kadesh Poem) where it parallels hdb, "slay"; w'w' (Wb. I, 280: 9–10) is the intensive reduplication of this simplex.

181. Or perhaps better, "Chamber of the Noble One," i.e., the resident god(dess): Feucht 1978: 73f.; the reference is to the "guardian spirit" of a shrine, often conceived of in serpent form: Gardiner 1946: 46, n. 17; L. R. Fischer 1969: 197ff.

182. Spencer 1984: 125–30. 183. I.e., the priestly offices in the temples.

183. I.e., the priestly offices in the temples.

(Redford, 1997, p. 31)

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Other resources:

On the several names of the pharaohs and other rulers of Egypt, and the meanings of these names:

<https://pharaoh.sc/ancient-egypt/period/second-intermediate-period/>

Lists of the kings of the various Egyptian and non-Egyptian dynasties, along with the various estimates of when and for how long they reigned:

<http://www.phouka.com/pharaoh/pharaoh/kingdoms/062int.html>

The website for the ongoing excavations at Tell el Dab'a or Avaris:

<https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/oeai/institute/branches/cairo/excavations-projects/tell-el-dab%CA%BFa>

“Colours of Ancient Egypt – Red”:

<https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/researchers-in-museums/2018/12/04/colours-of-ancient-egypt-red/>

On the Kamose “Victory Stela”:

<https://digitalkarnak.ucsc.edu/victory-stela-of-kamose/>

Various photographs:

www.apxphotography.com

Various rare and difficult-to-obtain books:

www.meretsegerbooks.com

